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S E C R E T ABUJA 002561

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/10/2011

TAGS: PREL PTER PARM NTI

SUBJECT: TFUS01: NIGERIA: WORKING TOGETHER TO FIGHT  
TERRORISM

REF: A. STATE 170698

B. ABUJA 2560

(U) Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter; Reasons 1.5 (b)  
and (d).

¶1. (S) As agreed during the October 8 meeting between the Ambassador and the National Security Advisor (Ref B), PolMilOff met October 9 with LTC Mohammed Idris, the NSA's Military Advisor and Mohammed K. Ibrahim, Assistant Director for International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to present Ref A demarche. (Both Idris and Ibrahim planned to brief their respective bosses shortly thereafter.)

Ibrahim remarked the evidence was strong though circumstantial, but he agreed when Idris mentioned there was surely sensitive and more compelling information that could not be shared. Ibrahim stated Nigeria was pleased to be among the countries to receive a call from the White House before the strikes in Afghanistan began. PolMilOff replied that the U.S. saw Nigeria as a partner and expected it to take the lead against terrorism in Africa, particularly in the sub-region.

¶2. (C) PolMilOff also passed Ibrahim and Idris a copy of a matrix showing the ratification status for ECOWAS states of multilateral counter-terrorism protocols, and emphasized that ratification of pending protocols by West African states would advance the international effort. Here again Nigeria could take a leadership role. Looking at international efforts, Ibrahim contended the U.S. should revisit its opposition to restrictions on small arms sales to non-state actors at the UN Small Arms Conference, implying that the U.S. should reconsider its position. Small arms are often used by terrorists and are a significant threat in Africa.

¶3. (C) Ibrahim noted that a similar Islamic school system exists in Nigeria as the Madrasas in Pakistan, and emphasized that poverty and education must be addressed as part of the campaign. Idris agreed, fearing that the poor and ignorant in Nigeria (and in other African countries) were susceptible to the appeal of radical groups.

¶4. (S) COMMENT: Ibrahim and Idris both appeared convinced of the justification for U.S. actions against Al-Qa'ida and the Taliban, and hopefully will convey this sense to their bosses and other Nigerian policy-makers. If so, the demarche would have proven to be useful in consolidating our support here.  
END COMMENT.

Jeter